

Phase III: Return Stronger – UPDATED OCTOBER 27, 2021

Trigger: Evaluation of COVID-19: unit responses by Authority personnel, hospital ICU and surge capacity, number of deaths, total percent positive, COVID vaccine availability, assessment of variant strains, and the direct impacts of implementing standard and transmission-based protocols.



Date: October 27, 2021

Phase III focuses on COVID-19 pandemic best practices to support stabilization of the virus. Stabilization can be realized through multiple approaches including virus related precautionary actions and human behavior modification, through mass community vaccinations, by implementing safe and effective therapeutics, and others. The ongoing evaluation of rate of spread and progression of COVID-19 and its variant strains, and altering the impacts to healthcare system status are important tactics used to monitor success.



The goals of Phase III may include, but due to the continued evolution of the virus, are not limited to:

Continue to employ strategies to reduce vulnerability, to build capabilities and adjust as necessary to maintain resiliency, and to continue to evaluate and modify plans to ensure long-term sustainability and functionality. Phase III will also include an emphasis on envisioning and adapting to the New Normal. Continued reassessment, reprioritization, and potential modifications to business and operational practices in relation to emerging changes will also continue to be evaluated in Phase III.

CDC Guidance (updated October 15, 2021):

The CDC highly recommends that all individuals, including those that are fully vaccinated, wear masks indoors in public if the individual is in an area/region of “substantial or high transmission”. Arizona and Maricopa County are currently considered **high transmission** areas.

*AFMA requires all personnel to wear a mask if they are **outside** of their “***family work unit***” while on duty; examples include the grocery store, public events, during Fire/EMS training events, or when visiting other AFMA family work units/facilities.*

The **family work unit for Authority personnel is defined as a functional unit or group of employees who share a common assigned space for work related duties. For example, administrative office staff, individual fire station crews, etc.*

Personnel that are NOT fully vaccinated are required to follow CDC guidance and Authority directives and guidelines.

It should be assumed that all members of the public are non-vaccinated or “presumptive positive” and should be treated as such per CDC guidance. Therefore, appropriate levels of PPE should always be deployed (i.e. wear proper mask, physical distance, practice good health hygiene, and disinfect equipment and surfaces regularly).

- All Personnel:
 - Prior to entering any Authority facility, all personnel shall conduct a **self-monitored*** health and wellness assessment including mental and physical wellbeing and report the results of the assessment to their immediate supervisor each day/shift. Personnel must stay home if not feeling well.

- All personnel (non-administrative *family work unit*) will be required to wear a mask upon entering administration facilities with limited contact, regardless of vaccination status.
 - All individuals entering the administrative facility are confirming that they do not have symptoms of COVID-19 or not aware they are COVID-19 positive.
 - Consider the use of virtual platforms integrating a combination of in-person and virtual settings where possible.
 - Maintain virtual public participation at governing board meetings until further notice.
 - Physical distancing, limit number of individuals to 6 ft radius per person, wear masks, decontaminate shared equipment in-between uses, wash hands before and after use and wipe down high touch areas, and continue to follow presumptive non-vaccinated guidance.
 - Modify practices and guiding principles as best practice data dictates.
 - Individuals at elevated risk for illness are strongly encouraged to limit their exposures.
- Community Risk Management Division:
 - Operations can resume with proper PPE and protective measure protocols.
 - Continue to monitor/evaluate Fire Corp duties, PPE needs, and limit potential exposure to Fire Corp members and the public. (*See Fire Corps Restoration Plan*)
 - Continue to provide a variety of community outreach and education programs through small in-person meetings using proper precautions and via alternative virtual formats whenever possible (Zoom, Teams, Facebook Live, etc).
 - Maintain ongoing partnerships with long-term care facilities, congregate facilities, HOA's, Recreation Centers, etc., concentrating on virus precautions and mitigation practices.
 - Continue regular community education messaging regarding COVID health and safety information and Authority programs and COVID related restrictions and practices.
- Support Services Section:
 - Continue to check, inspect, clean and maintain HVAC systems in accordance with CDC and OSHA standards specific to COVID ventilation practices.
 - Monitor ongoing cleaning and disinfecting procedures and practices for all facilities.
 - Provide hand sanitizer, disinfecting equipment and materials, signage, barriers, and decontamination tools for all facilities and response apparatus.
 - Manage PPE delivery and supply program.
 - Ensure proper health and safety practices for facilities and apparatus.
- Emergency Management Section:
 - Oversee and plan COVID-19 response practices.
 - Support PPE management and training.
 - Ensure Authority CDC, ADHS, MCDPH, and OSHA ETS adherence.
 - Perform initial and ongoing Hazard Analysis for the Authority per ETS.
 - Analyze COVID data to ensure appropriate directives and plans are in place.
 - Monitor best practices and propose protocol and directive modifications based on scientific evidence and lessons learned.
- Human Resources Section:
 - Ensure health screening and medical management practices are followed and documented as required.
 - Oversee COVID related rules, regulations, anti-retaliation protections and workers' rights.
 - Report work related ETS information to OSHA when required.

- Manage employee vaccination, testing, exposure, and illness recovery support, guidance, guidelines and practices.
- Assist in the creation and management of COVID related policies, plans, and directives.
- Incident Management Team (IMT) / Task Force (TF):
 - Manage current virtual Emergency Operations Center (EOC) platform.
 - Continue SitReps and IMT/TF meetings to maintain communications and Common Operating Picture.
 - Continue monitoring Arizona Department of Health, Maricopa County Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control and other agencies for guidance.
 - Continue to inform the Authority governing boards, management, personnel, other agencies, and the public as necessary.
- Operations Division:
 - Fire stations are NOT open to the general public.
 - Family members are also NOT permitted to visit stations at this time due to the high COVID transmission rate in Maricopa County.
 - Authority personnel may visit Authority fire stations; however, all personnel are required to wear a mask when in Authority facilities considered outside their normal *family work unit*.
 - Personnel should continue to focus on limiting risks whenever and however possible.
 - Consider all station visitors as “*presumptive non-vaccinated*” or “*presumptive COVID positive*” avoid close contact, social distance where possible, wear appropriate face coverings, sanitize/wash hands often, and decontaminate high touch areas frequently.
 - Limit gatherings to 6 ft radius per person, wear masks, physical distance, wash hands, disinfect equipment after each use, and seek outdoor areas to congregate whenever possible.
 - Fire station workout facilities are open to off-duty personnel with limitations.
 - Personnel must continue CDC, OSHA, local, state and federal recommendations including physical distancing, limited number of people in gym to 10 ft radius (most Authority gyms limited to 1-3 personnel at a time based on size of facility), decontaminate equipment in-between uses, no sharing of equipment, wash hands before and after use, and wipe down high touch areas often, bring your own towels, mats, and water bottles, continue to wear masks between workouts.
 - All operations personnel shall continue to wear proper masks on all incidents and when outside their *family work unit*, per Authority protocols and Directives.
 - Continue to decontaminate and disinfect fire/EMS apparatus and equipment following each incident and perform station cleanings and document these activities per Authority Directives.
 - Complete exposure reports and send to COVIDReporting@afma.az.gov per current Authority Directives.